

(19) World Intellectual Property  
Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
17 June 2004 (17.06.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
WO 2004/050956 A1

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: C25C 3/12

(21) International Application Number:  
PCT/IB2003/005713

(22) International Filing Date: 3 December 2003 (03.12.2003)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
PCT/IB02/05112 3 December 2002 (03.12.2002) IB

(71) Applicant (*for all designated States except US*):  
MOLTECH INVENT S.A. [LU/LU]; 6, rue Adolphe  
Fischer, 1520 LUXEMBOURG (LU).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (*for US only*): DURUZ,  
Jean-Jacques [CH/CH]; Rue de Hesse 4, CH-1204  
GENEVA (CH). DE NORA, Vittorio [IT/BS]; San-  
drigham House, none NASSAU (BS).

(74) Agent: CRONIN, Brian; c/o MOLTECH S.A., Quai du  
Mont-Blanc 21, CH-1201 GENEVA (CH).

(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU,  
AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU,  
CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE,  
GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR,  
KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK,  
MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT,  
RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR,  
TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (BW, GH,  
GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW),  
Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),  
European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE,  
ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE,  
SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA,  
GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

**Declaration under Rule 4.17:**

— *of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv)) for US only*

**Published:**

— *with international search report*

*For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

(54) Title: A METHOD OF CONDITIONING IRON ALLOY-BASED ANODES FOR ALUMINIUM ELECTROWINNING CELLS

(57) Abstract: A metallic aluminium electrowinning anode structure has initially an iron-based alloy outer part with an active anode surface which is essentially metallic and free of any ceramic compounds of metals from the metallic. The anode structure undergoes a conditioning treatment that includes: substantially preventing the essentially metallic active surface free of said ceramic compound from reacting with any reactable species, in particular oxygen and fluorine species, until immersion into a molten electrolyte containing oxygen ions; immersing into the molten electrolyte the metallic anode structure with its essentially metallic active surface free of said ceramic compounds; and polarising the immersed metallic anode structure to form on the metallic anode structure a dense and coherent integral iron-based oxide layer which is electrochemically active for the oxidation of oxygen and which inhibits diffusion of oxygen towards the metallic anode structure. The metallic anode structure can be covered with a temporary protection medium, e.g. a protective layer, that prevents ceramic-forming reactions at the metallic anode surface and is separable before or upon immersion into the electrolyte.

WO 2004/050956 A1